

WYCOMBE'S chances of winning the Berger Isthmian League title, which have see-sawed so often lately, took what looks like a final dip at Leatherhead on Saturday with a 1-1 draw.

But just how the Blues failed to take the vital maximum points is a mystery. They spent nearly all the second half around, if not actually in, the Leatherhead penalty area, and will have to look back on a Gary Lester blunder, missed chances and a last minute no-penalty decision, as costing them dearly.

Goalkeeper Lester was a doubtful starter before the match because of back trouble — and probably wished he hadn't played. He has saved Wycombe so many times this season and it was unfortunate that he should

By MIKE ALLEN Leatherhead 1, Wycombe 1

make such an elementary error as dropping a simple cross at such a vital time.

But he did, and Andy Bushell could not believe his luck and stabbed the ball home from three yards in the 50th minute.

Problems

If nothing else it made Wycombe play as if the league championship might rest on the final result. Within two minutes they were level. Simon Dexter, playing at right back in place of Paul Birdseye, who had moved over to the left for the suspended George Borg, sent over a teasing near post cross.

It caused problems for the Leatherhead defence who had not fully recovered when the ball came back again. Terry Scott flicked it on for Mick Holifield to put the ball home.

In the 64th minute

Wycombe had the ball in the back of the net again, but this time it was ruled off-side. Ken Wilson, who deserved a goal more than anybody for his tireless running, fired home after Scott had hit the post when the goal was at his mercy.

The linesman and referee concluded Scott was in an off-side position as Wilson shot.

A minute from time the referee, Mr Topping, made another vital decision that went against Wycombe. Terry Scott burst into the Leatherhead area and for being held back by defender Micky Cooke Mr Topping awarded an indirect free kick. Howard Kennedy hit the wall with his effort.

Committed

In the five minutes or so injury time played (for no apparent reason), Mick Holifield rifled a shot goal-

wards, only to see goalkeeper Peter Caswell block it with his body.

Caswell had already denied Kennedy and Scott with tips around his right hand post. Scott had turned and volleyed in the opening minutes of the second half, and then Kennedy picked the side to which Caswell had committed himself following a fine run by the Wycombe man.

Although at the end of the day it was points his side needed, Mike Keen must have been happy with the commitment of his side, despite a slow start.

LEATHERHEAD: P. Caswell, S. Dixon, C. Brooks, M. Cook, C. Wellman, D. Malley, R. Botterill, R. Elcombe, C. Kelly, A. Bushnell, J. Doyle. Sub: T. Page (not used).

WYCOMBE: G. Lester, S. Dexter, P. Birdseye, B. Davies, K. Mead, H. Kennedy, S. Long, M. Holifield, T. Glynn, T. Scott, K. Wilson. Sub: R. Dell (not used).

Referee: Mr M. Topping.

Half-time: 0-0. **Scorers:** Leatherhead: Bushnell (50 mins). Wycombe: Holifield (52).

BERGER Isthmian League Premier Division

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Slough	40	21	13	6	68	31	76
Wycombe	41	22	9	10	74	46	75
Enfield	40	21	11	8	76	42	74
Leytonstone	42	19	12	11	78	58	69
Sutton	38	18	11	9	77	59	65
Hendon	42	18	10	14	66	58	64
Dagenham	41	17	11	13	79	65	62
Harrow	41	16	10	15	56	51	58
Hayes	39	16	7	16	40	48	55
Staines	42	15	9	18	60	61	54
Bromley	41	15	9	17	60	67	54
Tooting	42	15	8	19	49	53	53
Hitchin	40	14	9	17	64	61	51
Dulwich	42	13	12	17	62	67	51
*Barking	42	13	12	17	58	72	49
Croydon	40	11	15	14	48	48	48
Harlow	41	11	15	15	52	63	48
Leatherhead	41	11	14	16	35	50	47
Carshalton	39	13	7	19	53	78	46
Walthamstow	40	13	7	20	46	74	46
Boreham Wd	41	10	12	9	45	68	42
Woking	41	11	7	23	39	66	37

* 2pts deducted. † 3pts deducted.

Earlier kick-off

THE kick-off time of Wycombe's final league encounter of the season at Bromley on Saturday has been brought forward one hour to 2pm to allow the Blues players to get back in time for a special tribute dinner to Jock Sheppard the same evening.

The long-serving Wycombe groundsman and one time physiotherapist is being honoured by a special function in Maidenhead, which has been organised by midfield player Howard Kennedy.

If Slough win at home to Sutton United tonight (Tuesday), then Wycombe's title challenge will be out of reach. However Enfield would still be able to catch them.